

Exciting New Changes for Existing Industry Program

Existing Industry Development is now Existing Business Services

What's in a name? A lot for the Department of Business Assistance's existing industry effort! As of October 1st, the Division of Existing Industry Development (EID) became the Division of Existing Business Services (EBS). "This is an exciting change for us that touches every level of the way we do business," said EBS Director, Jim Witherspoon.

At the heart of the division's change is a reengineering of the entire program. "We started with an examination of the business visitation program, but soon realized that we needed to empty our pockets and put everything on the table if we were going to create the best product and system for serving our customers," Witherspoon continued. The core of the new organization is a functional distribution of responsibilities, as opposed to a geographic configuration. Teams will remain integral to the operations of the division, but will target five function areas.

Industry visits will be coordinated through the **Contact** team via field representatives and visits from the division's eight project managers and director. The **Assistance** team will focus on problems and issues requiring extended attention and expertise. The new **Product** team will coordinate the nine business roundtables and advocate unique value added programs in areas such as worker recruitment and B2B linkages. The **Product** team will also offer best practices advice for localities fine-tuning their local existing industry programs. The **Research** team will develop reports on business conditions and issues impacting sectors of the Virginia business community. Finally, the **Satellite** function will continue via the operation of the division's Abingdon office.

"The new organization will allow us to communicate more efficiently with our customers and deliver value added services. Tapping our individual areas of expertise, we will be in a better position to respond to requests for assistance and create a conduit for issue identification," concluded Witherspoon.

News from the Financial Services Division

New Program Available for Disadvantaged Businesses

DBA Partners with DMBE to Implement P.A.C.E. Program

The Department of Business Assistance (DBA) and the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE) have entered into a cooperative agreement to develop and administer the Capital Access Fund for Disadvantaged Businesses. Governor Gilmore and the 1999 General Assembly created this fund to help address the financing needs of disadvantaged businesses and economically disadvantaged individuals. As addressed in the legislation and the cooperative agreement, the fund will be managed by DMBE and administered by the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority, which is staffed by DBA.

Initially, two loan programs will be offered through the fund, which, collectively, has been named the P.A.C.E. Program. P.A.C.E. stands for "Providing Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs," and the program will be available to assist businesses that are located in a HUBZone or are certified as a Minority Business Enterprise, a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, a Small Disadvantaged Business, a Virginia Women's Business Enterprise, or have an SBA 8 (a) certification.

The first of the two offerings establishes a loan loss reserve at participating banks to cover potential losses on loans enrolled by the bank. The reserve is funded by enrollment premiums paid by the borrower and the bank totaling between 3% and 14% of the loan amount and then matched by DMBE. The second P.A.C.E. Program product is a loan guarantee program that will provide a bank with up to a 90% guarantee on a loan to an eligible business. The guaranteed amount of the loan is limited to \$50,000.

Several banks, both on the regional and local level, have voiced a strong interest in participating in these loan programs. The P.A.C.E. Program will be available to Virginia businesses in the near future. Please contact DMBE at (804) 786-5560 or DBA's Financial Services division at (804) 371-8254 for more information.

News from the Existing Business Services Division

Net Recruiting... Have You Tried It?



Is your company recruiting via the Internet? Surveys have shown that Internet recruiting can be the least expensive method for attracting qualified workers to your company. While it is not a cure-all in today's tight labor market, understanding Internet recruiting and using it where appropriate makes good business sense.

The Existing Business Services division has published an *Introduction to Internet Recruiting*, which includes links and descriptions of free resume search and job posting sites, links to and information on fee-based sites, tips for effective searching, and a list of other resources. The new publication can be requested via email from wvehrs@dba.state.va.us or by calling (804) 371-0058. Consultation for businesses is also available.

Congratulations to
Arrowhead Space and
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of Falls Church,
the winner of the Southern
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News from the Workforce Services Division

DBA Strengthens Partnership with DRS

In today's tight labor market, businesses are constantly searching for opportunities to expand and improve their workforce. At a recent meeting of project managers from DBA's Workforce Services and the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), the two organizations decided to team up to help their clients. The logic of this partnership is clear since Workforce Services helps companies recruit and train new employees, and DRS helps people with disabilities receive training and obtain jobs.

DRS offers valuable services at no cost to help meet the specific labor needs of businesses, including prescreening candidates, on-the-job training, solving accessibility issues, and offering disability education programs. Workforce Services project managers now bring a DRS marketing manager to meetings with their current and prospective projects. In addition, Workforce Services is also participating in quarterly Regional Employment Network meetings hosted by DRS along with Military Outplacement, the Virginia Employment Commission, and numerous other job placement resources. At these meetings, employers highlight available jobs openings and are able to draw on a variety of resources in one room to fill those positions. DBA and DRS staff have received positive feedback from their clients on this new partnership and look forward to helping Virginia businesses find the employees they need.



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